A CORPUS-BASED ANALYSIS OF NEGATIVE CONCORD IN ENGLISH

ANÁLISIS DE LA NEGACIÓN MÚLTIPLE EN INGLÉS BASADO EN DATOS EXTRAÍDOS DE CORPUS

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ABSTRACT

This paper is a quantitative study of the corpus results for negative concord in British and American English. It covers the main features of negation and goes through the history of negative concord, apart from reviewing what is already known about this phenomenon with the aim of lighting up the path to new studies. Negative concord is a phenomenon that has been long discussed by many different authors, among which very few ventured to provide quantitative results. The corpus-based analysis carried out in this paper intends to prove right or wrong what has already been said and to find out new information about negative concord.

Este trabajo es un estudio cuantitativo de los resultados de corpus para la negación múltiple en inglés británico y americano. Abarca las principales características de la negación y visualiza la historia de la negación múltiple, además de analizar lo que ya se conoce sobre este fenómeno con objeto de iluminar el camino a nuevos estudios. La negación múltiple es un fenómeno del que muchos autores han hablado a largo y tendido, de los cuales pocos se han aventurado a proporcionar resultados cuantitativos. El análisis basado en datos extraídos de corpus que se ha llevado a cabo en este trabajo tiene la intención de probar o desmentir lo que ya se conoce y descubrir nueva información sobre la negación múltiple.

1. INTRODUCTION.

There are some non-standard varieties of English in North America, Britain, and Australasia that use negative items instead of non-affirmative elements in clauses with verbal negation. In these cases, the negation is marked in two or more places: once in the verb, and then through the use of certain negative words, such as *nobody, nothing, nowhere,* etc. This phenomenon is called negative concord and prescriptivists claim it is both non-standard and illogical. As a matter of fact, in schools they keep insisting on its ungrammaticality and encouraging students not to ever use it. Prescriptivists are right to say negative concord is non-standard, but saying it is illogical is to confuse logic and grammar. This paper aims to prove that two negatives are not always equivalent to a positive clause and that there are clauses with two grammatical negations but only one semantic negation. Standard speakers know about this phenomenon since it is very widely spread. In fact, it is a resource even singers use frequently in their songwriting and it is something common in

everyday English. Nevertheless, prescriptive manuals keep condemning it. The investigation carried out in this paper will prove that negative concord is more frequent than it is believed and that it is used in contexts other than informal ones, such as in the news, or even in academic environments.

2. OBJECTIVES.

• Analyze negative concord in terms of its frequency in British and American English.
• Find out which negators are the most frequent as second element, taking into account that *not* is the negator that appears most commonly as first element in a negative concord structure.
• Discover in which registers negative concord can be found.
• Analyze negative concord in terms of collocations, that it, find out what kind of elements go between the two negators in negative concord structures.

3. METHODOLOGY.

To explain the current state of the question, this paper has collected and discussed the main ideas from authors such as Quirk et al. (1985), Biber et al. (1999), Huddleston and Pullum (2002), Anderwald (2002), Palacios (2003) and Stone (2009).

Quirk (1985) has given way to the discussion about negation as a linguistic phenomenon, that is, the concept, the different ways negation can be formed in English, and the types of negation there exist. The findings in Biber et al. (1999) have been useful to deal with the frequency of negation and the occurrence of *not*- and *no*-negation. By means of Huddleston and Pullum (2002) the analysis of the phenomenon has been introduced in the paper. Through Palacios (2003), dependent and independent multiple negation were reviewed. Anderwald (2002) carried out a study about negative concord which has helped to initiate the investigation presented in this paper in that she collected the negators that appear most frequently in negative concord structures. And lastly, by means of Stone (2009), negative concord has been discussed in terms of gender-based information.

The second part of the paper is the corpus-based analysis of negative concord. In order to carry out the analysis, two different corpora have been used: the BNC and the COCA. The former is

the British National Corpus, a 100 million word collection of samples of written and spoken language from a wide range of sources, designed to represent a wide cross-section of British English, both spoken and written from the late 20th century. The latter is the Corpus of Contemporary American English, the largest freely available corpus of English which contains more than 520 million words of text, and it is equally divided among spoken, fiction, popular magazines, newspapers, and academic texts.

The two corpora have been used to search the combinations *not nothing, not no, not nobody, not no more, not nowhere, not never, not not,* and *not none* in order to compare the results in terms of register, collocations, the frequency in which they appear, and finally, the variety of English, that is, British or American. The combinations were searched by means of typing the negators that usually function as first and second elements in a negative concord structure, respectively, separated by an asterisk (e.g: *not * nothing, not * no,* etc.). Once the results were collected, a group of examples was discarded due to the fact that they were not valid to this study for different reasons that will be explained later. The most representative instances among the remaining cases were picked to illustrate the sections they correspond to, respectively.

4. NEGATION: ANALYSIS OF THE PHENOMENON.

To start with and to set a context, a definition of negation is needed before its analysis. According to the *Oxford Dictionary of Difficult Words* (2004), negation is the denial of the truth of a clause or sentence, typically involving the use of either a negative word (e.g: *no*, *not*, *never*, etc.) or a word or affix with negative force (e.g: *nothing*, *non*-). There are two different kinds of negation, as reported by Huddleston and Pullum (2002:150-151): clausal negation and subclausal negation.

Clausal negation happens when the whole clause is negated, and there are different types: the first one is verbal negation, in which a simple positive sentence is negated by inserting the clause negator *not* between the operator and the predication, as can be seen in (1):

(1) They are dancing. → They are not dancing.

In this case, the operator would be *are,* whereas *dancing* is the predicator. The negator *not* goes in between.

As Quirk et al. (1985:776) point out, in verbal negation the operator is the first auxiliary

verb of a complex verb phrase, or either *be* or stative *have* as the verb in a simple verb phrase. However, if the operator is not present in the positive sentence, the dummy *do* is introduced and is followed by the bare infinitive like in the case of modal auxiliaries, as illustrated in (2):

(2) Sarah knows you. → Sarah does not know you.

Since the positive clause lacks an operator, the dummy *do* has been used in (2) to make up for the absence.

The negator also occurs very frequently in the contracted form *n't,* exemplified in (3). Nevertheless this does not happen in formal English:

(3) We will not play this summer. → We won't play this summer.

Negation with contracted forms is an option that must be avoided in academic environments even though it is very frequent in everyday English. Quirk et al. (1985:777) propose two possibilities for contraction in negative clauses: negator contraction (4) and auxiliary contraction (5):

(4) She isn't my best friend any longer.
(5) I'll not tell her the truth for now.

As can be seen in the previous examples, in (4) the negator has been attached to the verb *is,* whereas in (5) it is attached to the subject *I.*

According to Quirk et al. (1985:777-778), there are a few syntactic features which differentiate negative clauses from positive ones:

a) Negative clauses are followed by positive checking tag questions (6):

(6) I haven't told you I have been hired as a professor, *have I*?

b) They are followed by negative tag clauses with additive meaning (7):

(7) Your brother is not going to the concert, and *neither am I*.

c) In speech, they are followed by negative agreement responses (8):

(8) A: Tyler doesn't know how to play football. B: *No, he doesn't.*

d) They are followed by non-assertive items:

(9) My little brother won't tell *anything.*

e) They do not occur with items that have positive orientation:

(10) *It isn't *pretty* late.

The syntactic features in *d* and *e* do not differentiate negative from positive clauses in other non-assertive contexts, such as questions (11) and conditionals (12):

(11) Isn't it *pretty* late?
(12) If you *ever* want my advice, don't hesitate to ask for it.

In (11) and (12) an assertive item with positive orientation has been used.

With respect to non-verbal negation, as pointed out by Quirk et al. (1985:778-782), it can occur in different forms: the first implies the use of words which are negative in both form and meaning. This kind of non-verbal negation is accomplished by means of negating a clause element other than the verb with *no* or *not,* or by means of negative words such as *none* or *never.* This type can be seen in (13):

(13.a) Alan is no teacher.

Where both verbal and non-verbal negation are possible, there is a huge difference depending on which one has been used. If (13.a) is transformed into a clause with verbal negation (13.b) and both versions are compared, they differ greatly in meaning:

(13.b) Alan isn't a teacher.

On the one hand, the version with verbal negation (14) is just a declarative negative sentence that is informing about Alan not working as a teacher. On the other hand, in the example with non-verbal negation (13) Alan might be a teacher, but the utterance is meant to deny and criticize his pedagogical abilities in this profession.

In formal contexts, the negative element may be moved to initial position triggering subject-operator inversion very often, as can be observed in (14):

(14) Not a moment did I hesitate.

Although the structure of this example is not prototypical due to the inversion it contains, it has clausal negation, as shown by its acceptance of the syntactic criteria listed before.

The second context in which non-verbal negation can occur is with words that are negative in meaning but not in form, among which are *seldom, rarely, scarcely, hardly, barely, little,* or *few.* This type of non-verbal negation is illustrated in (15):

(15) They hardly have any friends.

As can be observed, the clause in (15) is apparently positive. Nonetheless, since *hardly* is negative in meaning the clause adopts negative polarity, feature which can be seen in the use of the non-assertive *any*. Besides, the tests that account for negative polarity listed above can be successfully applied to all the examples that correspond to this kind of non-verbal negation.

As happens with non-verbal negation with words that are negative in both form and meaning in formal contexts, in this second type of non-verbal negation there can also be subject-operator inversion. It is only found in formal environments, as (16) exemplifies:

(16) Rarely does she go to visit her grandparents.

The inversion triggers the introduction of the dummy *do* (*does* in this case), which is not present in the same example without inversion.

Now the focus needs to be set on the occurrence of verbal and non-verbal negation. Basically, the former can be considered the default choice since it can be formally replaced by non-verbal negation only about 30% of the time, whereas a verbal negation form can replace a non-verbal one about 80% of the time, as Biber et al. (1999:169) state.

With respect to the frequency of the more usual verbal negation forms, Biber et al. (1999:159) claim that negative forms with *not* and *n't* are much more common in conversation and fictional registers. As regards conversation, they propose six reasons that account for this:

a) First and foremost, verbs are more numerous in conversation than in the other registers.

b) Clauses are shorter and more numerous than in the other registers.

c) There is a great deal of repetition in conversation, including repetition of negative forms.

d) Certain structures which include negative forms, such as multiple negation and question tags, are characteristic of spoken discourse.

e) A number of verbs which collocate strongly with the negator *not* are particularly frequent in conversation. These include mental verbs like *forget, know, mind, remember, think,* or *want.*

f) Last but not least, conversation is interactive and invites both agreement and disagreement, whereas writing generally presents the perspective of a single author or author group.

As for the high frequency of negation in fiction prose, Biber et al. (1999:160) believe it might be due to the dialogue passages although further study needs to be done in order to reach a fully reliable reason.

From the beginning of this paper, non-assertive items have been very frequently mentioned, and this is so because they have a great relevance for negation. As Quirk et al. (1985:782-783) points out and as has been mentioned before, clausal negation is frequently followed by one or more non-assertive items. Some common ones are: *any, anything, anybody, anywhere, anyplace, any time, any more, any longer,* and *at all,* among a few others.

The combination of *not* with a non-assertive form can be replaced, in most cases, by a negative word, such as *no, none, neither, nothing, nobody,* etc. Therefore, there are two negative equivalents of each positive sentence:

(20) He'll meet us somewhere.

(20.a) He won't meet us anywhere.

(20.b) He'll meet us nowhere.

The two negative equivalents of (20) and of each positive sentence are cases of verbal and non-verbal negation, respectively. As Quirk (1985:783) states, in all cases, the combination of *not* and a non-assertive word is more colloquial and idiomatic than the negative variant.

The other kind of negation mentioned at the beginning of the paper is subclausal negation. Subclausal negation differs from clausal negation in that it negates a word or a phrase without making the whole clause negative:

(22) Mark is such an unintelligent man.

As can be observed, (22) is a positive clause. However, the phrase *an unintelligent man* has been negated through the addition of the prefix *un-* to the adjective *intelligent,* and it is the only part of the clause that is negated.

Double negatives can be frequently found in subclausal negation, as happens in (23):

(23) She's a not unattractive woman.

In examples like (23), the negative *not* is used to reverse the already negative force of the following expression. In these cases, the double negative phrases are devices of understatement and require a gradable adverb or adjective as head. The polarity of this kind of clauses is positive rather than negative.

In a second type of subclausal negation, some content disjuncts, either having a negative prefix or conveying unexpectedness, may be negated, as in (24):

(24) Not surprisingly, they missed the train.

The clause in (24) is a case of unexpectedness and can be negated by adding the negator *not* before *surprisingly.*

There is another kind of subclausal negation in which *not* negates a gradable adverb:

(25) I visit them not very often.

Here, only the phrase *very often* is negated, therefore the polarity of the clause is positive.

Not can also modify adverbial expressions of extent in distance or time:

(26) My friends and I went to that theme park not so long ago.

The kind of subclausal illustrated in (26) is one of the most frequent types in everyday

English.

In the following group, the quantifiers *a few* and *a little* may be negated by *not,* and the quantifier *little* by *no.* An example is (27):

(27) They displayed no little interest in her progress.

This type of subclausal negation is used in formal contexts and the same occurs to the cases with *a few* and *a little.* As happens with double negatives, the meaning conveyed by this kind of subclausal negation is that of understatement, and a similar effect is accomplished by the comparatives *more, less,* and *fewer,* as exemplified in (28):

(28) This lesson will take no more than an hour.

Prepositional phrases may also be negated by a negative word inside the complement, as can be seen in (29):

(29) We finished our homework in no time.

This kind of subclausal negation is very frequently used in everyday English.

Finally, the last type of subclausal negation appears in noun phrases that express a compressed predication:

(30) The children want nothing but television.

It is worth mentioning that this kind is not so common as the previous ones.

5. NEGATIVE CONCORD

Having analyzed the main features of negation, the focus needs to be set on the main topic of this paper: multiple negation, also known as negative concord. The most accurate definition of it reads as follows:

"Negative concord can be defined as the use of two or more negative morphemes in a clause to convey a single negation. It is typically realized by the sentential negator *not* followed by a negative indefinite pronoun." (Nevalainen, 2006:257).

The example in (31) is a prototypical case of negative concord in which the clause has been negated twice:

(31) God ain't never given me nothin'.

Firstly, the example in (31) is negated in the verb through the use of *not/n't* and, secondly, by using *nothing* where the non-assertive item *anything* would be expected. Other ways to accomplish negative concord will be further discussed.

Negative concord is a linguistic phenomenon that already existed in the Late Middle English and Early Modern English periods. The study carried out by Kallel (2007) reveals that the loss of negative concord was a case of natural change triggered by some internal factors. Basically, it was the result of prescriptive views on language which adopted Latin as a model for English grammar. The change took place in the Early Modern English period, during the 17th century. This, nonetheless, seems to struggle with what Nevalainen (2006:258) says about the use of negative concord during this period. He traced the disappearance of multiple negation in social terms between the mid-15th and the late 17th centuries. However, negative concord might have been a widespread linguistic phenomenon which had not entirely died out by the 18th century; instead it may have survived in the lower ranks of society, as Nevalainen states (2006:258). During the Old English and some of the Middle English period, the primary negator was *ne.* After its loss, the expression of negation through the use of the secondary negator *not* together with another negative item became popular.

By the Late Middle English and Early Modern English periods, speakers had two alternative options and a competition between the two forms arose. Speakers could now use *any* words in contexts where *n* words had been used before. The same happened with the grammars speakers used; they had two different grammars: the new and the old one. They alternated their use while the two of them coexisted and were competing for the same structural position.

After the loss of the bi-partite negation, *n*-words were used in structural positions where only negative polarity items are found today in order to reinforce the negative meaning.

The change into a form of language that completely excluded negative concord was a slow process that did not happen overnight and is likely to have been implemented in speech before it spread to the written form of language.

According to Palacios (2003), negative concord can be divided into two subtypes: dependent and independent. In the first one, negative forms convey a single negative meaning:

(36) You've never seen nothing like it.

Since the clause has been negated through the introduction of *never* between the auxiliary and the lexical verb and, then, the word *nothing* appears where the non-assertive *anything* would be expected, (36) is a prototypical case of dependent negative concord.

In independent multiple negation, negative forms possess independent negative force:

(37) Won't eat any veggies, you know, none.

In the examples of this kind, the negative forms are independent because none of them can be replaced by non-assertive forms. In the particular case of (37), the effect of the negative concord is merely emphatic.

There are only two instances of dependent multiple negation in written English in the BNC, according to Palacios' findings (2003:5). One was given in a parliamentary debate, and the other one appeared in a broadcast discussion. Both of them were cases of cumulative negation, that is, both intended to heighten the negative meaning of their proposition, which is the most common effect among the cases of dependent multiple negation. An example of cumulative negation can be seen in (38):

(38) I haven't never eaten no sweets.

In clauses that follow the same pattern as (38), the more negative markers there are, the more emphatically negative the utterance is.

As for independent multiple negation, as Palacios (2003) points out, some kinds are used to express an understatement on the speaker's or writer's part. In this case, the negatives are weakened by affirming something through the contrary, a phenomenon known as litotes, as illustrated in (39):

(39) It's not something no one has ever done before.

However, there are other kinds of independent multiple negation which have the same role as the examples of dependent multiple negation, that is, reinforcing and intensifying, as in (40):

(40) There's no one to blame not really.

The addition of *not really* to the already negative clause *there's no one to blame* makes it more emphatic.

Finally, there is another group of independent multiple negatives that involve a modal operator and a negative infinitive, expressing positive meaning emphatically:

(41) You have no reason not to come.

In (41) there is a speaker encouraging or convincing the hearer to go somewhere by means of using a modal operator and a negative infinitive. The effect accomplished is known as denial.

As Palacios (2003:6-12) pointed out, corpus results show two main groups of independent multiple negation: clause negation + subclause negation, and clause negation + clause negation.

In the former, there is one negative which affects the whole clause while the other affects only part of it, yet both belong to the same syntactic construction. The case in (41) is an example of clause negation + subclause negation.

In clause negation + clause negation, two negative clauses are part of a complex clause. They can be found in adverbial subordinate clauses of reason introduced by *because,* and in existential sentences introduced by *there,* as can be seen in (42) and (43), respectively.

(42) Ian and I have never done things because Daddy never encouraged us to do things.

(43) [...] But there were no magazines, no newspapers, no […].

Finally, different independent multiple negation forms can co-occur in cases of repetition in spoken language, illustrated in (44). In other instances, the second negative can be used to reinforce the first one, as in (45).

(44) Well, I couldn't say, I couldn't say, no, you're not boring because it was so obvious.

(45) No, not a word of course.

Old linguists, known as prescriptivists, believed that two negatives destroyed one another or were equivalent to a positive clause, whereas modern linguists did not understand the rejection of this phenomenon. There are some linguists who have already talked about negative concord, such as Jespersen (1917), Seright (1966), Singh (1973), Baker (1970), Horn (1989), or Van der Wouden

(1994).

Jespersen is one of the authors who devoted particular attention to this phenomenon. He studied cases where negation expressed a positive meaning:

(46) Not without some doubt.

He also studied cumulative negation or double negatives as they are found in present-day non-standard English.

(47) I can't get no satisfaction.

Resumptive negation or negative sentences followed by a supplementary negative outside the frame and the negative scope of the first sentence are also part of his study:

(48) You won't go to the concert, not without your father's permission

And finally, he also dealt with paratactic negation or sentences with verbs of negative force like *doubt, hinder, deny,* or *forbid* plus negative dependent clauses:

(49) It never occurred to me that your work […] would not advance our common object in the highest degree.

More recently, Anderwald (2002) carried out a deep investigation on negative concord in British English. She collected her data from the British National Corpus spoken subsample (BNC Sps), which included the following negative elements and their combinations: *-n't, not, nobody, no one, nothing, nowt, none, never, nowhere, no,* and the paratactic elements *nor* and *neither.* These combinations are the most frequent patterns of negative concord in English. She searched these negative elements in their co-occurrence with generic elements, that is to say, *A*-quantifiers, that would substitute the negative elements in Standard English in the same sample. Her study revealed that the average usage rate of negative concord in comparison with the equivalent Standard English forms was 14%, which she thought was a relatively high percentage. However, Anderwald (in Malkamäki, 2013) found that negative concord did not seem to be present uniformly in all dialects. To explain this, she gives three possible reasons: firstly, there was a lack of samples from the whole spectrum of social classes. Secondly, the uneven amount of spoken samples resulted in poor

representativeness by a given dialect area, such as Humberside, and therefore could not be considered valid and reliable. A third factor negatively affecting the inconsistent results was the uneven length of individual speakers' contributions.

As Anderwald (in Malkamäki, 2013) pointed out, only five negators act as the first element in a clause containing a negative concord structure. Out of these, *n't/not* is used in over 88 percent of all cases as the first element. The second most frequent is *never* with 9 percent. The rest of negators play a minor role as first elements in negative concord structures. As for second elements, *nothing* and *no* are almost equally frequent, making up together 84 percent of all realized second elements.

Interestingly, Stone (2009) took Anderwald's study a bit further by having a look at gender-based use of negative concord in the regional dialects of England in the BNC. He came to the conclusion that women used standard negation 62.5 percent and men 37.5 percent of the time.

However, a pattern of regional distribution in the use of negative concord was noticeable in relation to north-south division. In the north, women seemed to use the standard form more than men, but less than them in the south. The mid regions acted as a middle point for the two genders. In order to explain this north-south division, Stone (in Malkamäki, 2013:20) suggests that the process of standardization began in the south of England and gradually spread up north. Whereas women show stronger signs of linguistic change, men have not adapted to the standard in the north in the same way women have. Besides, Stone also states that social pressure exerted upon women has influenced women's quicker adoption of standard forms so as to avoid stigmatization. And moving back to men again, Stone (in Malkamäki, 2013:20) suggests that the notion of covert prestige may also have forced men to retain their use of non-standard forms.

The most relevant explanation for the situation in the south is found in the background information of individual male speakers since there seems to be a high proportion of middle to upper class men in the BNC. Stone illustrates the case with the situation of the region of Home Counties, which is known for its population of high social standing, due to which it comes as no surprise that, there, women use more standard forms than men.

6. CORPUS RESULTS FOR NEGATIVE CONCORD

In order to get the results for negative concord in English, two different corpora were used: the BNC (British National Corpus) and the COCA (Corpus of Contemporary American English). It has been taken into account the fact that Anderwald (2002) found that the negators *n't* and *not* are the most frequently used as first element in a negative concord structure. Therefore, the focus has been set on those combinations resulting from putting together *not* and the rest of negators that could act as second item, that is, *not nothing, not none, not never, not nobody, not nowhere, not not, not no,* and *not no more.* Once the results were collected, they were compared in terms of how frequent they were in each corpus, in which registers they appeared, and with which collocations they could be found. Throughout the rest of this paper, collocations will be understood as the combinations resulting from the two negators and an inclusive form which appears in between.

The results show a total of 889 examples in the BNC and 2928 cases in the COCA when the combinations aforementioned are looked up. However, there are many cases to discard mainly because the corpora do not recognize clausal barriers. Therefore, in some examples, the two negators belong to different clauses, as illustrated in (50) and (51):

(50) I'm not saying nothing can get through.
(51) That does not mean nothing should happen in the meantime.

These two examples can not be regarded as negative concord since we expect the negator *nothing* to appear exactly where it is in each sentence. In the prototypical cases of negative concord with *nothing* as second element, we would expect *anything* instead.

There are some other cases that will not be regarded as valid for more specific reasons that will be discussed when they appear.

1. NOT... NOTHING.

Moving on to the in-depth analysis of the results, in the BNC there is a total of 75 examples of *not* as the first element combined with *nothing* as the second element. Out of these, 36 correspond to the fixed expression *not for nothing* (52):

(52) Not for nothing is he known as “the Destroyer”.

The cases like in (52) can not be considered prototypical examples of negative concord. Besides, they trigger inversion very frequently. It could rather be considered a case of litotes in which, as mentioned before, something is affirmed by negating the contrary.

A total of 26 examples correspond to the prototypical negative concord structure. In the 3 cases left, the two negators belong to different clauses despite appearing together, therefore, as was mentioned above, they are not relevant to our study.

Out of the 26 cases which correspond to the negative concord structure, 16 instances are given in the context of conversation (53); 5 of the examples appear in prose fiction (54); 1 is found in a meeting (55); 1, in the context of politics and law education (56); 1, in a speech (57); 1, in a newspaper (58); and the last one appears in the context of social sciences education (59):

(53) Craig, you're not getting nothing else. You've had chocolate.
(54) We hang into each other for ages, not saying nothing.
(55) And to the normal layman (pause) that sounds better than not saying nothing.
(56) One can not insult nothing.
(57) They could not find nothing wrong for why I was so ill.
(58) Whatever you do, do not do nothing.
(59) […] But that, it does not mean nothing. It indicates that there is something […].

All of them are prototypical examples of the negative concord structure resulting from the combination of the negators *not* and *nothing,* save one. In the example (55) there is negative concord but in the form of litotes; the first clause is negated twice so as to affirm the second, and the clause which follows it makes it clear that something is being affirmed through the contrary.

In the case of the COCA, the results for *not...nothing* outnumber the ones found in the BNC, as happens with all the combinations of the study. There is a total of 290 results for this combination, out of which 123 correspond to the fixed expression *not for nothing* (60)*,* already mentioned in the BNC results:

(60) Not for nothing has his history been reprinted century after century so that every generation can learn.

There are 85 valid examples of negative concord once the instances in which the negators belong to different clauses, which are 7, have been left behind. The litotic examples, represented in (61), are 19, and the rest are prototypical instances:

(61) People say: we are doing nothing. We're not doing nothing. There's a lot going on in the cities.

As has been mentioned before, in cases like (61) the multiple negation is used to affirm something through the contrary.

As far as register is concerned, 42 examples appear in spoken contexts (62), 22 in fiction prose (63), 10 in the news (64), 7 in magazines (65), and 4 in academic environments (66):

(62) I should have waited these whole three years and not did nothing?
(63) I'm not holding nothing back and I don't give a damn what anybody thinks.
(64) I'm not cooking for him, washing. I'm not doing nothing.
(65) I don't know how long he had been there, not saying nothing.
(66) Use a condom to protect yourself, to not catch nothing.

Litotic examples are very much present in all of the combinations of the study since it is one of the most used literary devices for accompanying negation. Apart from (61), there are more representative examples like (67) and (68):

(67) To be sure, the state of Louisiana and its parishes are not doing nothing.
(68) And I found I could not do nothing. The uniform comes with some responsibility.

The example in (67) goes on saying that the state of Louisiana is building a handful of new things and therefore it can not be said that they are doing nothing there; they are actually doing something. In (68) it is easily noticeable that the speaker feels a huge responsibility for what they are doing and what the meaning the uniform carries with it, so they feel they just can not do nothing; they need to be productive and live up to what is expected from them. The rest of the cases correspond to prototypical negative concord structure. It is also worth mentioning the peculiar case of (62), in which there is *did* where a *done* is expected, that is, *did* is being used as a past participle, a rare phenomenon given in some particular dialects of English.

With respect to collocations, both varieties of English display the same range to a greater or

lesser extent. Small differences can be found in that verbs in their base forms are preferred in the BNC, whereas verbs ending in *-ing* are the dominant form in the COCA. Besides, the collocations that include a preposition, a verb in the past, an adverb, or an adjective are more frequent in the BNC despite showing fewer results for the combination in general.

2. NOT... NO.

The second most frequent combination of negators in both corpora is *not...no.* In the BNC, there is a total of 241 examples, out of which only 14 would be prototypical examples of the negative concord structure. However, some of the rest correspond rather to the *not...no more* structure and, therefore, they will be analyzed in section 5. There are many others in which the negators belong to different clauses.

Out of the 14 valid prototypical examples, 6 appear in conversation (69); 3, in fiction prose (70); 1, in the context of a broadcast discussion (71); 1, in an interview (72); 1, in the environment of politics and law education (73); and finally, 1 last case is given in a debate (74):

(69) I said they're not taking no notice.
(70) They're not playing no game.
(71) Now, there's been lots of talk about gay and lesbian people not having no rights.
(72) So you're not getting no heating there, in that bedroom at all.
(73) I am not advocating no guidance though.
(74) But as you'll see from the map it's not by no means a consistent level [...].

This combination leads us to results that display perfect prototypical characteristics of negative concord. As a reminder, in the prototypical cases of negative concord, the clause is negated twice: firstly, by means of negating the verb through the use of *not/n't* and, secondly, by using *nothing* where the non-assertive item *anything* would be expected.

It is worth mentioning that no litotic cases for this combination were found, neither in the BNC nor in the COCA.

With respect to the COCA, there exist 912 cases for this combination. There are 101 valid examples and there is a total of 40 possible collocations. However, as expected, negators belonging to different clauses will make some of them invalid to this study.

As also happens in the BNC, a few other examples rather correspond to the *not...no more* structure, which will be discussed in section 5.

Focusing on the valid examples, there are 43 cases given in conversation (75); 29 appear in fiction prose (76); 6, in the news (77); 4, in academic contexts (78); and only 3 are found in magazines (79):

(75) I did not take no money.

(76)You'll never find your flat face in any magazine. Not in no movie or no TV.

(77) It's like, "You're not getting no hit here, buddy".

(78) […] in this sample questionnaire with drivers who did not found no significant differences […].

(79) He not need no lawyer because he confess over.

As regards the results from the COCA, it is worth mentioning the fact that there were no litotic examples, and also that, despite appearing in an academic context, the example in (78) includes two features which make the sentence absolutely informal: firstly, it contains a double negation, which is rather a non-standard device; and secondly, it contains two simple pasts instead of one, which are *did* and *found.*

Lastly, concerning collocations, in the BNC verbs ending in -*ing* are the dominant form since 10 out of 14 cases include a verb of this condition. The other 4 examples correspond to collocations which have a verb ending in -*ing,* a verb in the past, or a preposition between the two negators. The cases extracted from the COCA coincide with the BNC to a greater or a lesser extent since the most frequent collocation is the one that includes a verb ending in -*ing,* although there are also those with a verb in its base form, with a verb in the past, or with a preposition. However, since the examples found in the COCA very usually outnumber the ones from the BNC, there is always a high probability that the COCA will display a wider range of collocations, as happens in this case. In the COCA, there exist collocations with adverbs, or adjectives, in spite of not being so common.

3. NOT... NOBODY.

When the combination of the negator *not* and *nobody* is looked up, only 16 examples appear in the BNC. The more we progress in our list of negators functioning as second element, the fewer

results are found. Nonetheless, not all of the examples can be regarded as valid. As a matter of fact, just 4 of them correspond to the negative concord structure. Other examples found, as happens in the previous sections, are instances in which the negators do not belong to the same clause. Interestingly, in this case, the cases that appear in fiction prose outnumber the ones in any other register. In fact, 3 out of the 4 valid examples are found in the context of fiction prose (80), whereas just 1 appears in conversation (81). It is rare to find that the examples of negative concord in fiction prose outnumber those found in conversation, yet here is one exception:

(80) She had never had the belt before. Not from Miss Hazelwood, not from nobody.
(81) We're not doing nobody down.

As can be seen, the example in (80) is a prototypical case of negative concord, whereas in (81), the only one found in conversation with this combination of negators, contains a phrasal verb, which is *to do someone/sombody down,* whose meaning is that of criticizing somebody, and here it can be found used with a prototypical negative concord structure.

With respect to the results found for American English, the COCA displays a total of 86 cases, out of which only 20 examples and 16 collocations are valid to this study. There are 17 cases which illustrate the prototypical use of the structure in question. Litotic examples can be seen again, since 3 cases appear in this query.

Up to 9 examples appear in fiction prose (82), 7 are given in conversation (83), 2 are found in the news (84); and other 2, in magazines (85). Interestingly, as happens in the BNC, the cases of negative concord in fiction prose for this combination of negators are more numerous than those given in conversation:

(82) Told her to watch over it and not let nobody drive it.
(83) I don't take nobody's money, sir.
(84) We'd better not let nobody get a hand on this guy.
(85) It's not about nobody else right now.

As opposed to the BNC, the COCA exhibits a wider range of registers for this combination. In the BNC, only fiction prose and conversation were found, whereas in the COCA also news and magazines.

As for collocations, it is worth mentioning the fact that while in the BNC all of the cases save one have a preposition between the negators, in the COCA, collocations with a preposition

seem to be the minority choice. In fact, there are only two cases that include a preposition. Verbs ending in *-ing* and verbs in their base form are preferred instead. Nevertheless, there are also cases including an adverb or an adjective in the COCA.

4. NOT... NO MORE.

All of the results found for the combination *not... no more* appear also in the results for *not... no* since the corpora can not make distinction between both sequences when *not...no* is searched. In other words, the combination *not...no* includes also all the examples for *not...no more.*

In the BNC only 12 examples are shown for this combination. All of them are prototypical cases of negative concord. 10 instances are given in conversation (86), whereas only 2 appear in fiction prose (87):

(86) I was saying I'm not buying no more.
(87) We're not children no more.

Regarding the case of the COCA, there is a number of 22 examples of the combination. Out of these, 15 are considered prototypical, whereas the other 7 are cases in which the negators do not belong to the same clause, they are mostly separated by commas or dots. There are no litotic examples in this case. In conversation, 9 instances are found (88); 4 appear in the context of fiction prose (89); and 2 cases are given in the news (90).

(88) You're not yourself no more.
(89) I am not captain no more.
(90) I am not angry no more.

As can be seen, all of the examples depict a scenario in which there is a change of state, a physiological or psychological change, or a situation change.

Concerning collocations, in the BNC the combination *not...no more* leans towards having a verb ending in *-ing* between the two negators. However, despite displaying very few results for this combination, the BNC shows a wide range of possible collocations, among which are those which include a verb in the past participle, an adverb, an adjective, or even a common noun. On the other

hand, there is no dominant collocation in the COCA since the same exact collocations with respect to the BNC can be found, but including a new one that contains a pronoun, and all of the collocations appear evenly in a greater or lesser extent.

5. NOT... NOWHERE.

The combination of the negators *not* and *nowhere* is not a productive one as regards negative concord, at least in the BNC, since only 4 examples can be found and only 2 are valid to this study. Both of them are found in conversation (91), (92):

(91) I'm not going nowhere near that thing.
(92) I can cough but it's not coming nowhere.

The rest of examples are, again, cases in which the negators belong to different clauses.

In the COCA, it is a productive combination despite not having so many examples as previous combinations. As a matter of fact, 28 of the 32 existing instances are valid. Just one of them is a case of litotes; the rest are prototypical cases. In American English, this combination appears most frequently in conversation with 17 examples (93); 8 instances are given in fiction prose (94); 2, in magazines (95); and 1 example can be found in the news (96):

(93) You're not getting nowhere in your life.
(94) You're going to have to hold on Iree and not go nowhere.
(95) In fact, it was not from nowhere, but close to there, that the Turtles came.
(96) I am telling you, I'm not going nowhere.

Interestingly enough, the two examples found in the BNC include a verb of movement between the two negators. In the COCA, all of the cases depict a similar scenario in which there is movement too since the elements that go between the two negators are the verbs *going, getting, go, sitting,* and the informal form *goin';* and there is also the preposition *from.* Therefore it can be said that the combination is productive only in the COCA, although in a very restrictive context.

6. NOT... NONE.

There is only one result in the BNC for this combination that can be regarded as valid since in the rest of examples the negators do not belong to the same clause. The only case found appears in the context of non-academic social sciences (97):

(97) 'Cause I've not had none for so many hours.

Similarly to what happens in the BNC, there are very few examples of this combination in the COCA. There is a total of 35 cases, out of which only 7 are valid to this study and all of them are prototypical. Interestingly enough, this is another case in which the results that appear in fiction prose (98) outnumber the ones that are found in conversation (99), with 5 of the former and 2 of the latter:

(98) Me, personally, I'm not touching none of your stuff.
(99) I did not drag none kids into this.

It is worth pointing out that the examples in (98) and (99) are quite informal. There might be cases of negative concord used in formal contexts, such as academic ones, as can be seen in previous sections; they only contain a negative concord structure which, instead of being ungrammatical, should just be regarded as non-standard. And there might be also cases in which the negative concord structure is used in very informal sentences, as happens in (98) and (99).

As far as collocations are concerned, the only collocation found in the BNC contains a verb in the past. In the case of the COCA, the number of cases including a verb ending in -*ing* and those which contain a verb in its base form are almost even; 3 cases of the former, and 4 of the latter.

7. NOT... NEVER.

When this combination is searched in the BNC there are no results, at least concerning negative concord. In most of the cases the two negators belong to different clauses, sometimes separated by a comma.

As for the COCA, with the combination of *not* and *never*, only one collocation and three

instances are found. The collocation is *not to never* and it is a prototypical case of negative concord since, grammatically, *ever* is expected where *never* goes.

Even though there are 168 cases given with this combination, only the 3 instances above are valid. However, there are two more collocations which might be worth mentioning: *not hear never* (100), and *not have never* (101).

(100) […] But they will not hear never, you know, not till now, till these things happen Tuesday.

(101) Well, my view is I should not have never ever been in that courtroom.

The example with *not hear never* does not follow the same pattern as the prototypical examples of the negative concord structure. Nevertheless, it can be regarded as negative concord since the adverb *ever* is expected where *never* is.

With respect to the example with *not have never* it happens the same as with the previous one, that is, it is not prototypical, but it can be considered negative concord since there is a *never* where an *ever* should go.

8. NOT... NOT.

This is the last combination with the negator *not* working as first element and it is also the least productive. In the BNC there are no results which can be regarded as prototypical of the negative concord structure, and so is the case for the COCA too. The vast majority of the examples found are cases of litotes, among which three instances stand out in the BNC, and two in the COCA.

In the BNC, it is worth mentioning the case of *not afford not* (102), *not choose not* (103), and *not pretend not* (104):

(102) But it's something we can not afford not to be involved in.

(103) Three million people presumably do not choose not to heat the living area of their homes in winter.

(104) Clelia did not pretend not to be delighted by Clara's delight.

In all the examples given with *not afford not,* the speaker or speakers' intention is that of

conveying the need they feel of doing or carrying out the action they are talking about. With respect to *not choose not,* in the particular case of (100), the speaker is saying that there are three million people who can not heat their homes in winter and this is not their fault, they obviously do not choose this outcome. The cases with *not pretend not* are similar to one another. In the case of (101), the character talked about did not hide her emotions, but showed her delightfulness as it came instead.

These are the most relevant cases found in the BNC. However, there is one last case that reads *waste not, want not* which is an idiom whose meaning is *if you do not waste anything, you will always have enough.* This idiom appears isolated when exemplified since it is normally used on its own without any element preceding or following it.

Concerning the COCA, as was mentioned at the beginning of this section, there are no prototypical results for the combination *not...not* in this corpus in spite of the fact that there are 1383 examples found. The two cases which are worth pointing out are *not afford not* (105), like in the BNC, and *not to not* (106).

(105) I can not afford not to have my salary. I don't have a land to rely on.

(106) The thing is not to not try something.

There is a number of 23 examples in the COCA for *not afford not,* all of them cases of litotes like in (105). As for *not to not,* there are 7 examples for this construction, very similar to one another. In particular, in (106) the speaker is encouraging the hearers to try without worrying about the outcome.

Finally, as mentioned before, there is also the idiom *waste not, want not,* whose meaning was explained in the discussion of the BNC results.

7. CONCLUSION

One of the objectives of this paper was to find out which negators are the most frequent as second element, taking into account that *not* is the negator that appears most commonly as first element in a negative concord structure. The graphics in Figures 1 and 2 illustrate the results for both the BNC and the COCA:

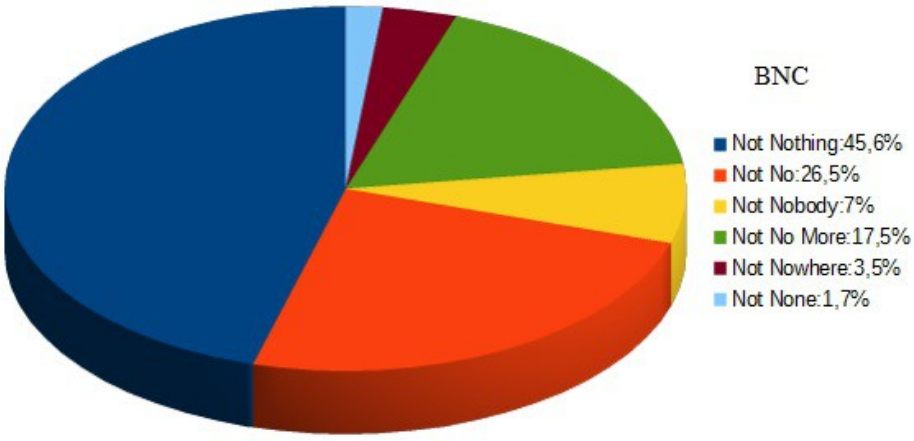

Figure 1

As can be seen, *nothing* and *no* are the two negators used most frequently as second element in a negative concord structure in British English, used 45,6% and 26,5% of the time, respectively. In this variety of English, the combination *not no more* stands out as well appearing a 17,5% of the occasions. The rest of negators are the minority choice since together they make up only 12,2% of the cases. It is worth mentioning that no examples were found for the combination *not not,* as also happens in American English. Moreover, the lack of results for *not never* only happens in the BNC.

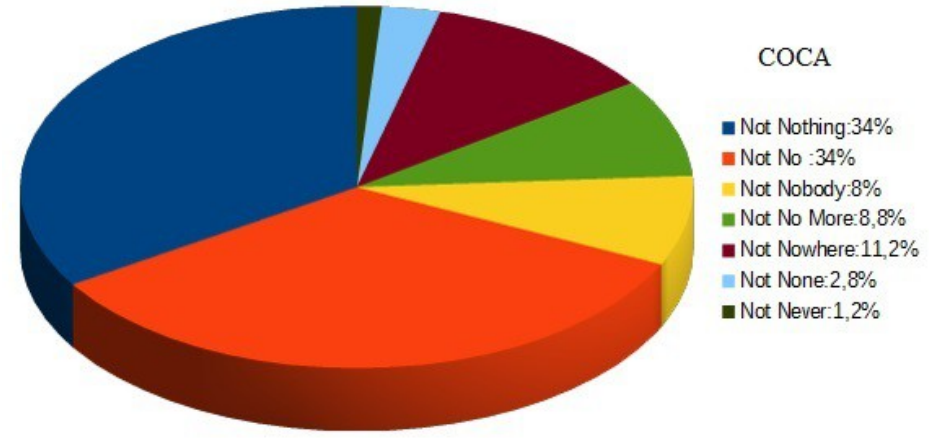

Figure 2

In American English, the negators *nothing* and *not* are the majority choice in a negative concord structure as well, both found in a 34% of the cases equally. The results as very similar to the ones found in the BNC, nevertheless, they differ in that there are results for the combination *not never* in the COCA. *Not never* appears in a 1,2% of the cases. Although it is a small percentage, it shows that American English displays a slightly wider range of negators in negative concord structures.

The second objective of this paper was to discover the registers in which negative concord is most commonly found. The results are shown in Figures 3 and 4:

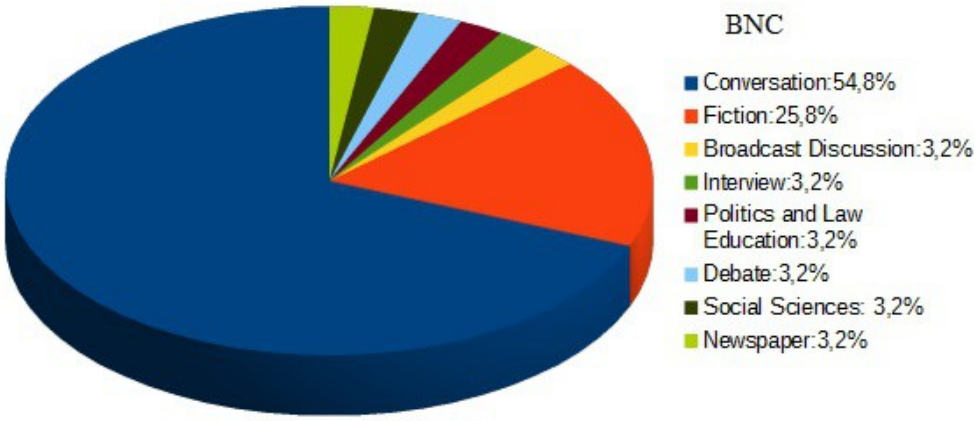

Figure 3

Figure 3 depicts a scenario in which the cases found in conversation and fiction dominate, with a 54,8% and a 25,8% of the examples, respectively. However, in the case of *not nobody* the instances found in fiction outnumber the ones given in conversation. Despite showing fewer results for negative concord than the COCA, the BNC displays a wider range of registers in which the phenomenon occurs. There are cases of negative concord in unexpected contexts, such as in Politics and Law education, or in Social Sciences. The reason for negative concord to appear in these more formal academic contexts are still unknown and more research needs to be done to find answers for this. Negative concord can also be found in interviews, broadcast discussions, debates, or newspapers in British English.

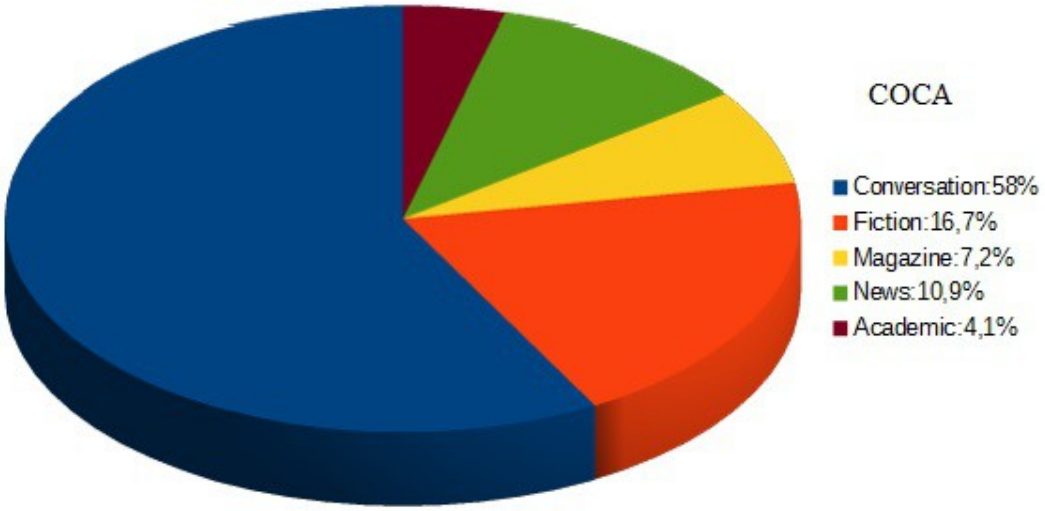

Figure 4

As shown in Figure 4, the cases of negative concord in conversation in American English outnumber the ones found in fiction. The difference is even bigger than in the BNC as 58% of the examples appear in conversation, whereas only 16,7% are given in fiction prose. The reason why the difference is greater than in the BNC is because there is high percentage of the instances found in other contexts, such as in magazines, the news, or even in academic ones; they all together make up a 19,2%. It is worth pointing out that, as happens in the BNC, there are more cases with *not nobody* in fiction prose than in conversation, and the same happens with *not none.*

Finally, the last objective of the paper was to analyze negative concord in terms of collocations, that is, with respect to the type of elements that can be found between the two negators in a negative concord structure. The results are illustrated in Figures 5 and 6:

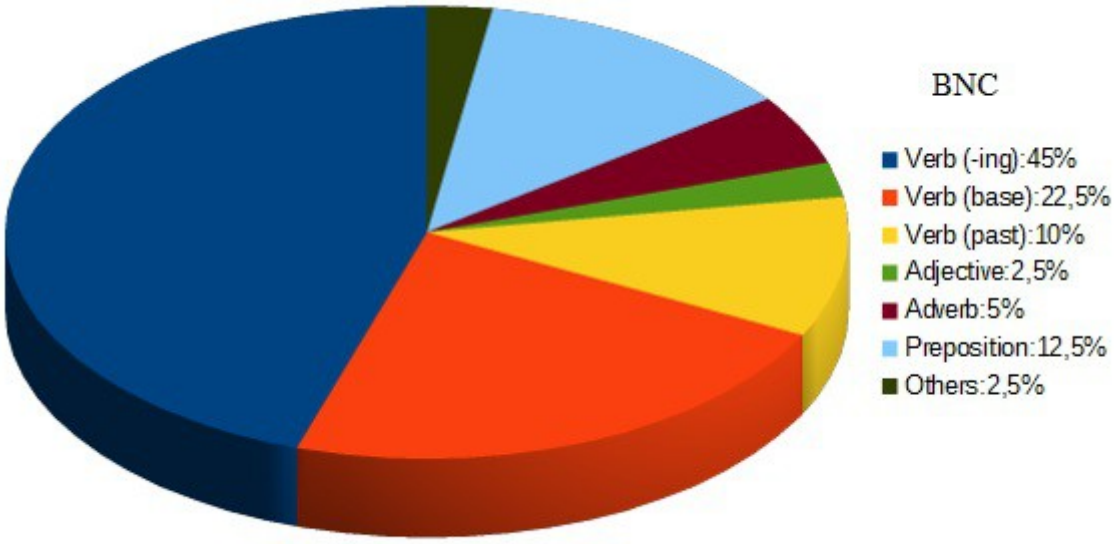

Figure 5

In British English, a verb ending in *-ing* is the most common elements that appears between the two negators in a negative concord structure. This collocation stands out with a 45% of the cases. The second most common element is a verb in its base form. However, it makes up the 22,5% of the examples, far from the 45% from the verbs ending in *-ing.* Verbs in the past and prepositions are also worth mentioning since they are the 10% and 12% of the instances, respectively. Adjectives ,adverbs and others are the minority choice with less than a 10% each.

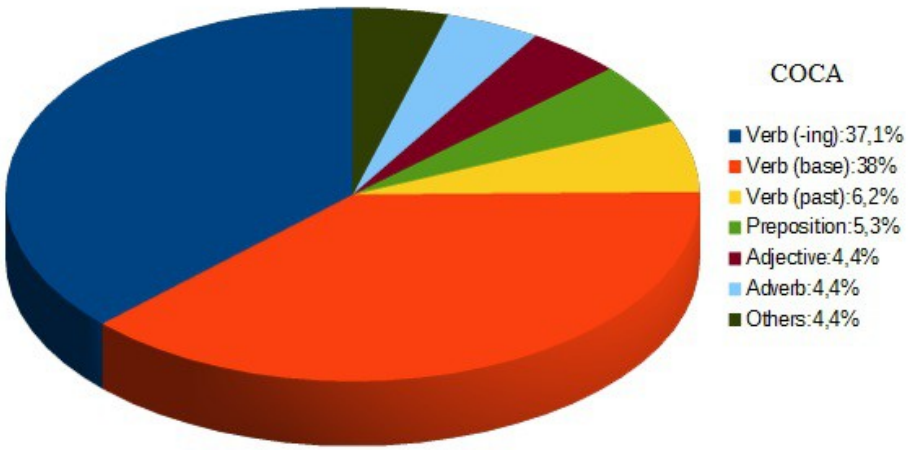

Figure 6

Figure 6 shows that, similarly to what happens in British English, most of the negative concord structures in American English consist of the two negators and either a verb in its base form in between, option that makes up the 38% of the cases, or a verb ending in -*ing,* which are the 37,1%, therefore, both options appear evenly in the COCA. Apart from these, negative concord structures also include verbs in the past, prepositions, adjectives, adverbs, nouns, pronouns and infinitive markers. Nevertheless, these are not so frequent.

Lastly, as was mentioned at the beginning, Biber et al. (1999:159) claimed that the negative forms *not* and *n't* are more common in conversation and fiction prose, and negative concord is not an exception since it appears most frequently in those two registers, as can be seen in the investigation carried out in this paper.

Anderwald (in Malkamäki, 2013) pointed out that *nothing* and *no* are almost equally frequent, making up together 84 percent of all realized second elements, although, as has been proved, this is only the case of American English. In British English, *nothing* is much more frequent than *no* as second element.

In conclusion, as has been proved throughout this paper, negative concord is not an isolated phenomenon that only a few speakers use, but a linguistic resource used by millions of speakers of different dialects of English. The frequency in which it can be found in several registers, including more formal ones, should be a reason for prescriptive manuals to reconsider whether the phenomenon should continue to be regarded as illogical.

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